

Current Intelligence Report

10 March 2017

(U//~~FOUO~~) Criminal Actors Increasingly Using E-mail Account Compromise Techniques, Stealing Millions in Real Estate Settlement Funds

Criminal Investigative Division

(U//~~FOUO~~) **Summary:** The FBI assesses criminal actors are increasingly employing various e-mail account compromise (EAC) techniques to target victims, including borrowers, settlement/title companies, real estate agents, and builders, netting millions in illicit proceeds, which are often redirected to US banks, money service businesses, and international accounts in Nigeria, South Africa, China, Ghana, Turkey, and India.

(U//~~FOUO~~) This information was derived from open-source reporting [redacted] and FBI investigative information. It updates a previous Intelligence Note published in January 2015 and notes additional victims and the use of internet chat rooms to facilitate schemes.

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(U//~~LES~~) Relevance: [redacted]

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- (U) A review of mortgage and real estate settlement-related FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) consumer complaints from sources, with direct access and unknown reliability, reveals a 43-percent increase between January 2015 (124 complaints) and February 2016 (177 complaints). Consumers reported the amount of funds perpetrators attempted to illegally obtain increased from \$300,000 in January 2015 to \$16 million in February 2016.¹

- (U//~~LES~~) [redacted]

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- (U//~~FOUO~~) [redacted]

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(U//~~LES~~) **LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE:** The information marked (U//~~LES~~) in this document is the property of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and may be distributed within the Federal Government (and its contractors), US intelligence, law enforcement, public safety or protection officials and individuals with a need to know. Distribution beyond these entities without FBI authorization is prohibited. Precautions should be taken to ensure this information is stored and/or destroyed in a manner that precludes unauthorized access. Information bearing the ~~LES~~ caveat may not be used in legal proceedings without first receiving authorization from the originating agency.

- (U//~~FOUO~~) [REDACTED]

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- (U//~~LES~~) [REDACTED]

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(U//~~FOUO~~) Operational Strategy: [REDACTED]

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(U) End Notes

¹ (U) See Internet Crime Complaint Center Public Service Announcements at www.ic3.gov/media/2016/160614.aspx; www.ic3.gov/media/2015/150827-2.aspx; and www.ic3.gov/media/2015/150827-1.aspx for additional information.

² (U) [REDACTED]

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³ (U//~~FOUO~~) FBI; Case information; [REDACTED] [Title Redacted]; UNCLASSIFIED//~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~; UNCLASSIFIED//~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~; [REDACTED]

⁴ (U) FBI; Case information; [REDACTED] [Title Redacted]; UNCLASSIFIED//~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~; UNCLASSIFIED//~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~; [REDACTED]

⁵ (U) [REDACTED] (U) [REDACTED] UNCLASSIFIED//~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~; UNCLASSIFIED//~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~; [REDACTED]

⁶ (U) FBI; Case information; [REDACTED] [TITLE REDACTED]; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; [REDACTED]